<u>In the Claims:</u>

Please amend Claims 1, 11, 24, and 28; and add new Claims 32-33, all as shown below. Applicant reserves the right to prosecute any originally presented or canceled claims in a continuing or future application.

1.   (Currently Amended) A conversation manager <u>executing on an intermediate collaboration</u> <u>server</u> for managing the flow of messages in a collaboration system, comprising:

a conversation initiation logic that initiates a conversation among participants, wherein said conversation is a collective set of messages exchanged according to an extensible protocol, wherein said extensible protocol provides the ability to specify both the information and business protocols used by participants for said conversation<u>, wherein the protocol is extended by the</u> <u>participants with no changes to the conversation manager</u>;

a participation registration logic that registers said participants in said conversation; and[[,]]

a conversation repository that stores conversation management data, wherein said conversation management data is used to manage said conversation among said participants.

2.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein the conversation manager controls the flow of said conversation between the participants.

3.   (Canceled).

4.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein the conversation manager controls a publish/subscribe service for accepting said messages and sending said messages to and from said participants.

5.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 4 wherein a registered participant sends said messages to the publish/subscribe service for distribution to one or more said participants.

6.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said conversation is initiated by an initiator participant authorized to initiate conversation.

7.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 5 wherein the conversation repository includes instructions for the distribution of said messages sent via the publish/subscribe service to the participants.

8.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said conversation is terminated by a terminator participant authorized to terminate said conversation among all said participants.

9.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said conversation is aborted by the conversation manager at any time by sending abort messages to said participants.

10.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 9 wherein a participant in the aborted conversation is compensated for automatically by a substitute participant.

11.   (Currently Amended) A method for managing conversations using a conversation manager executing on [[in a]] an intermediate collaboration server of a collaboration system, comprising the steps of:

initiating a conversation among participants, wherein said conversation is a collective set of messages exchanged according to an extensible protocol, wherein said extensible protocol provides the ability to specify both the information and business protocols used by participants for said conversation, wherein the protocol is extended by the participants with no changes to the conversation manager;

registering said participants in said conversation; and[[,]]

storing conversation management data in a conversation repository, wherein said conversation management data is used to manage said conversation among said participants.

- 3 -

12.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 including controlling the flow of said conversation between the participants.

13.   (Canceled).

14.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 including controlling a publish/subscribe service for accepting said messages and sending said messages to and from participants.

15.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 14 including sending said messages from a registered participant to the publish/subscribe service for distribution to one or more participants.

16.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 including initiating said conversation by an initiator participant authorized to initiate said conversation.

17.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15 including storing in the conversation repository instructions for the distribution of said messages sent via the publish/subscribe service to the participants.

18.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 including terminating said conversation by a terminator participant authorized to terminate said conversation among all said participants.

19.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 including aborting said conversation is aborted by the conversation manager at any time by sending abort messages to said participants.

20.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim [[18]] 19 including compensating automatically for the aborted conversation participant by using a substitute participant.

21.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said business protocols include cXML, BizTalk, RosettaNet and proprietary business documents.

22.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said participants define routing and filtering for said messages.

23.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 further comprising a module to apply content transformation for said messages.

24.   (Currently Amended) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said participants handle the implementation of their own business process [[and]] with rules defined locally while confirming in addition to [[the]] rules defined by said information and said business protocols.

25.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said conversation is associated to a conversation space, wherein said conversation space is an abstract structure wherein messages of said conversation are transmitted among participants according to said protocol, wherein said conversation space and with one of said business protocols are identified by an URL.

26.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 25 wherein said participants access said conversation space using a particular business protocol.

27.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 25 wherein said conversation space supports multiple business protocols by using multiple URLs.

28.   (Currently Amended) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said conversation repository comprises information related to said business protocols, identifiers for said conversation identifiers, identifiers for said participants, identifiers for said messages and said messages.

29.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said protocol is extensible by said participants.

30.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said protocol further allows quality of service parameters for each message.

31.   (Previously Presented) The conversation manager of claim 1 wherein said conversation initiation mechanism initiates a plurality of concurrent conversations among participants.

32.   (New) A conversation manager executing on an intermediate collaboration server for managing the flow of messages in a collaboration system, comprising:

an extensible protocol that provides an ability to specify both an information and a business protocol used by participants for a conversation, wherein the extensible protocol can be extended by the participants with no changes to the conversation manager;

a participation registration logic that registers the participants in the conversation, wherein the conversation is a collective set of messages exchanged according to the extensible protocol; and

a conversation repository that stores conversation management data, wherein the conversation management data is used by the conversation manager to manage the conversation among the participants.

33.   (New) A method for managing conversations using a conversation manager executing on an intermediate collaboration server of a collaboration system, comprising the steps of:

providing an extensible protocol that provides an ability to specify both an information and a business protocol used by participants for a conversation, wherein the extensible protocol can be extended by the participants with no changes to the conversation manager;

registering the participants in said conversation, wherein the conversation is a collective set of messages exchanged according to the extensible protocol; and

storing conversation management data in a conversation repository, wherein the conversation management data is used by the conversation manager to manage the conversation among the participants.